

*The reasons and necessity of the
Reformation.*

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED AT
SALTERS-HALL,

APRIL 17, 1735.

By *THOMAS LEAVESLY.*



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN GRAY, at the *Cross-Keys*, in
the *Poultry*, near *Cheapside*.

M DCC XXXV.

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Reformation.

A

SERMON

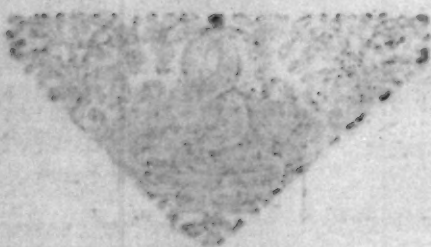
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Printed for John Gray, at the Castle-Knave, in
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HEBREWS xi. 8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out, into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

THE restless attempts of the Roman power, by its emissaries every where, to bring Protestants again into bondage, have inspir'd the concern for your establishment in truth and liberty, which has been expressed in a course of sermons in this place. Popery has been truly represented to you; and the artful disguises of it, to hide its frightful deformity, have been taken off; that you might see it naked and uncolour'd. In

In 1685, Dr. *Wake*,* the now primate of the church of *England*, observ'd; It is a long time since it has been resolv'd by many of their Casuists, that it is lawful to disguise the sentiments of their religion, not only in private conferences, but in the very pulpit itself, when there is a sufficient reason for the doing of it. But, says he, I cannot tell whether it be so generally known, that it is lawful for them to set their hands, and to approve those books whose principles and doctrine they dislike, by an art peculiar to themselves, and which Protestants who are used to sincere dealing will find it a little difficult to believe. You have been again and again warn'd of this; and their claims and principles have been set before you truly, that you might form a judgment of them for your own conduct, and your converse with any that are deceiv'd, or would pervert you.

If there be any true logick or reasoning in the world, we must conclude, that a reformation, from such a disorder'd state of religion, is necessary for all those who would please and honour God, and adhere to Jesus Christ, and save their own souls.

This is what is now incumbent on me, to make and maintain this inference, and impress it on your mind; and I am persuaded that

* Preface to the exposition of the doctrine of the church of *England*, &c.

that any but those that have eyes, and yet will not see, any that will but open their eyes must see that,

It was the most reasonable and necessary thing to attempt and carry on that reformation, which all the Christian world, except the usurpers themselves, requir'd, and cry'd out for; and even those usurpers were constrain'd to make some professions of that necessity, and some feign'd shews of intending to do that work themselves, that others more hearty and sincere might drop it, and leave it to their more artful management.*

It must be confess'd that these corrupters of religion had, with exquisite craft, set the true articles of the Christian faith in the front of their impostures; they have own'd the divine inspiration of the sacred scripture; the articles of the apostles creed, and more, the *Nicene*, *Athanasian* creeds, established by the councils. And what, would you reform from these? Are not these

* *Anno 1523.* *Adrian* gave commission to his nuncio in *Germany* to confess, that the confusion was caused by the sins of men, especially of the priests and prelates, confessing that some years since some abominations have been committed in that holy see; many abuses in spiritual things, many transgressions of the commandments, and lastly, all things turn'd to the worst; so that it may be said, the infirmity has pass'd from the head to the members, from the Popes to the inferior prelates, insomuch that there hath been none that doth good, no not one.

enough

enough to edify your souls, and secure your salvation? But pray let us see what is that long roll that is join'd with them, that must be taken and eaten together, that we must swallow down and concoct as well as we can, though our conscience and all within us turn against it. Alas we find, that the *Trent* religion, *Pius's* creed, has given us twelve articles of Christian faith, only as the old *Romans* led their captives in triumph, while the following articles of Popery are to bear all the glory upon the necessity of our salvation; and believing in Christ will not avail us unless we swear obedience to the Pope.

Now what is this but to set *Solomon's* porch to the house of *Baal*, or the temple of *Dagon*? This is no less impiety than that of the priest, that poison'd the emperor with a consecrated host. What greater dishonour can be done to the word of God, than just to make it a preface to the traditions of men, whereby all the commandments of God are made void? These shams of the *Samaritans* are only to delay and hinder the building of the house of God; *Let us, say they, build with you, for we seek your God as you do, and we do sacrifice to him:** yet were they adversaries of *Judah* and *Benjamin*. *Zerub-*

* Ezra iv. 2, 3.

babel and Jeshua the chief of the fathers of Israel declare to them, You have nothing to do with us to build an house to our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel. Then their enemies weakned their hands, and troubled them in building; and hired counsellors to frustrate their purposes, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia.

Thus it hath been a stale artifice of evil men and seducers, to mix truth with errors, to make poison palatable, that it may be taken without suspicion, and work without fail; and so by catholick creeds, and the names of catholick church, and general councils and the like, many that have had a detestation for the encroachments of Popes, and their court and consistories, are yet kept religiously in the communion of the *Roman* church, as they esteem it; but for you fellow Protestants, we say, as the apostle *John*, 1 *John* ii. 11. *We have not preached, and written to you, because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lye is of the truth.*

Our adversaries with a sovereign impudence would face us down, that notwithstanding all we have and can say of the incroachments and usurpations, tyranny and corruptions of the *Roman* church, we can have no right to separate from her and reform ourselves, and enter into a communion with those that think themselves called

of God so to do, but that we must be damnable hereticks and schismaticks for attempting and persisting in it. And that altho' the *Roman* church were indeed become heretical and idolatrous, and whatever we charge upon her doctrine and worship, still we must be under the guilt of schism, and suffer the consequences of it. That it is not lawful to make any change of religion † without the Pope and a council. ‡ And so they admit that monstrous canon,——If we see the Pope neglecting his own salvation and that of his brethren, unprofitable, regardless of his work, silent of all good ; that he hurts his own salvation, drawing with him innumerable people to the utmost misery, to be punished with him eternally with many stripes——Yet no man ought to reprove him or chastise his faults, because he is to judge all the world, unless one knows that he err in the faith. ||——So the general of the *des Lainez*, in his suffrage: None can reform the *Roman* church, for the servant is not above his Lord. You will surely see we have a contrary pattern before us in the text, and that the good reformers of the sixteenth century, and all that follow them, as the apostle *Paul* speaks to the *Romans*, *walk in the*

† *Boniface*, Bishop of *Mayence*.

‡ *Decret. Grat. Dist. 40.*

|| *F. Paul*, 721.

*steps of that faith of our father Abraham.**

When the God of glory appear'd to him and convinced him of the ungodliness of idolatry, and made himself known to him, and called him to go out from that idolatrous communion, he had been brought up in; he obeyed at all adventures, and goes out in the strength of faith, and commits himself to the conduct of providence, in firm dependance on God's promise, and resignation to his will.

You will easily see the sense and spirit of my text shine in what I shall offer to you, and strongly proving the necessity, and shewing the reasons of that reformation that we adhere to and maintain. *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.†*

I shall endeavour to discharge what is assigned me, I. in considering distinctly the reformation that we speak of, and shew you what we refer to and mean by it.

II. The reasons and necessity of it; and conclude.

As to the first, the reformation:

We don't pretend to set up the happy and glorious instruments of it as a new eccle-

* Rom. iv. 12.

† Rom. iv. 23, 24.

fiastical judicature, and to account for all the incidents, and every step of that wonderful work.

We don't erect a protestant supremacy and infallibility upon the ruins of the papal, nor undertake to maintain all the doctrines of *Luther* and *Zuinglius*, or *Calvin*, or the churches of *France*, or *England*, or *Scotland*. This would be to build up again what we have destroy'd, and to ruin that liberty of examining and proving all things, that we may hold fast that which is good.

The word REFORMATION looks back to an original rectitude established by God in the very nature of things, and declar'd and settled by the only supreme authority of God himself, by those whom we are sure he empowered and qualify'd; and where these are contradicted, we may reject all pretenders to a divine authority; *To the law and to the testimony.*

God has given man his understanding to this purpose, which has an original liberty and power to observe things, and enquire and judge with due care and circumspection, to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, that we might try things which differ, and *approve things that are excellent.* * And whoever would engage

* Phil. i. 9, 10.

our submission, must do it by *commending themselves to our conscience in the sight of God, by the manifestation of the truth.* †

We have a sure rule in the gospel of Christ, established by an anathema infinitely dreadful: *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, than that we have preached, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any preach another gospel unto you, than that you have received, let him be accursed.* ‡ 'Tis no new thing in the world for men to break through the divine and sacred settlements of religion, and to pervert the gospel of Christ. There ever were false prophets and false apostles: Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: those who sat in the chair of *Moses* had leavened the *Jewish* religion, and were to be heard with great caution, notwithstanding the authority they had received; and when they became enemies to the great reformation that Christ had undertaken, they were to be no farther regarded.

REFORMATION itself has two essential and comprehensive parts:

1. Detecting and disclaiming, renouncing and forsaking all false authority, and every corruption of the sure institutions of religion, which we have received from God.

† 2 Cor. iv. 2.

‡ Gal. i. 8, 9.

The apostle stiles gospel times, *the time of reformation*, διασώσεως: * importing the end and occasion of Christ's appearing in the world, when things were lapsed into utter disorder, whereby God was dishonoured and displeased; sad confusion and lamentable darkness, and mistaken notions of God and religion, spread and prevailing in the world, to the dishonour of God, and corrupting the minds and manners of men, and making their lives flagitious, and so destroying the hopes of that great salvation God had formed men for, and which he intended in all the institutions of religion. Whatever, therefore, opposes this great design of Christ's coming, is to be resisted; we must depart from it, and protest against it.

2. The second part of reformation is an actual return to that simplicity of subjection and obedience, that we owe only to the great author and finisher of our faith. He came to reform the world, and lead men back to the right ways of God, which he hath impressed on the conscience, and published by his prophets, and messengers, and ambassadors to the world. *We were like sheep going astray, but now are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of our souls.* † Thieves and robbers had climbed into the

* Heb. ix. 10.

† 1 Pet. ii. 25.

sheepfold,

sheepfold, to fleece and devour the sheep, † when their voice, their very speech, their doctrines bewray'd them; we must not follow, but flee from them. But when we hear the voice of Christ, and he call-eth us, and leads us out, and goes before us, we follow him, *for we know his voice*, and are, as we ought to be, assured it is he and not another that calls, and leads us.

II. The second thing we are to open to you is, the reason and necessity of that reformation, which was begun in so remarkable and wonderful a manner, in the beginning of the 16th century.—The occasions and calls for it were many, and extremely pressing; the liberty of mens understanding and conscience violated in the most insolent and outrageous manner; their dictates suppressed and stifled; the true and original settlements of religion by God and Christ vacated and defeated, and dominion over the faith and consciences of men cruelly exercis'd: and the original charters of the children of God were conceal'd, with evident erasements and false glosses. The *Roman* pontiff set up an empire of darkness, and, as a strong man armed, kept the house as his own property. Instead of the subjection and allegiance we owe to God

† John x.

and Christ, and that humble and sincere
 obedience that we are to yield to the gos-
 pel, the papal claims engross and top over
 all: and those that profess'd themselves
 the creatures of the Pope, so far slighted
 the gospel of our salvation, that as we are
 told by *Zuinglius*, * *John Faber* the vicar
 of *Constance* said, We might have liv'd
 in peace, if there had been no gospel:
 And cardinal *Hofius*, That the church
 would stand on a firmer foot, *Meliori*
Talo, if the gospel had never been writ-
 ten. But instead of this, the bishop of
Bitonto, at the opening of the council of
Trent, with a flaunting oratory, calls upon
 the woods of *Trent* to eccho it through
 the world, that all should submit them-
 selves to that council, which if they do
 not, it will be justly said, The Pope's light
 is come into the world, and men have lo-
 ved darkness better than light. † This
 indeed appeared like blasphemy to some
 that attended, and it was wish'd, that, at
 least, he had not taken the formal words
 of holy scripture, that he might not have
 shewed so openly to disesteem it. Those
 who had any knowledge of the court of
Rome, could not but see the sad occasion
 there was for reformation: We have an
 account from one bred up in the *Roman*

* Op. T. 2. p. 622.

† F. Paul, 132—3.

bigotry,

bigotry, and even after his account of *Rome* continuing a catholick; by what steps he came to know the papal imposture.* Going to *Rome*, he quickly saw there was nothing in what he had been taught to think of the Pope and Cardinals.---He had thought that the Pope had every day news from paradise, That he sent whom he would to heaven or hell, That he was holy, infallible, impeccable in all that he said or did; as he ought to be, if Christ had given him such an employ as he pretends.---He had a most extended knowledge of all things, a continual application to the salvation of all men: and so in proportion of the Cardinals, he revered them exceedingly at a distance.

But such was his disappointment, that it almost distracted him. Nothing appeared *in that holy city, in that mother and mistress* of all churches, but horrible dissolution of manners, in court and city, without the least signs of the fear of God; but abominations of every kind.---This made him think, how is the world abused? Oh that they could see this to open their eyes! Is this his holiness that gives pardons, and indulgences, and canonizes saints? are these the people that must give out laws and rules of religion to the whole world? This

* Moyens furs pref.

made him ready to renounce Christianity ; till the opportunity of reading a *Latin* testament reliev'd him, and gave him consolation ; but made it utterly impossible to believe, that the Pope was the universal vicar of Christ ; but made appear that Christ was the head of his church, the church his body, the faithful his members.

---Not one word of Pope or Cardinals, or any that belonged to them ; but examples and exhortations to humility, godliness, chastity, charity, renouncing the world and its pomps, its grandeurs, its vanities, its riches and pleasures, by master and disciples. But all things directly contrary in the Popes and the whole court.

Nothing can be more manifest than that the papal pretensions of sovereignty must destroy the liberty of our understanding, and divert men from enquiring after the mind and will of God, and studying the mind of Christ : for I think I may say, in truth, that half so much has not been said of our obedience to Christ, as has been said for his pretended vicar, and the usurped power of what they call the church. I shall set before you claims of the pontiff of *Rome*, as they are drawn up by the excellent Dr. *Barrow*, who has thoroughly examin'd and effectually demolished them, viz.* That to the Pope, a sovereign mo-

* Q^{uo} p. 31.

narch by sanction of the whole church, do appertain royal prerogatives, called *Regalia Petri*, in the oath prescribed to the bishops; such as these which follow,

To be superior to the whole church, and to its representative in a general synod of bishops. To convocate general synods at his pleasure, all bishops being obliged to attend on his summons. To preside in synods, so as to suggest matter, promote, obstruct, over-rule all the debates in them. To confirm or invalidate their determinations, giving life to them by his assent; or subtracting it by his dissent. To define points of doctrine, or to decide controversies authoritatively. To enact, suspend, dispense with ecclesiastical laws and canons. To relax or evacuate ecclesiastical censures, by indulgence and pardon. To void promises, oaths, obligations to laws, by his dispensations. To be the fountain of all pastoral jurisdiction and dignity. *And after many others.*

To be himself unaccountable for any of his doings, exempt from judgment, and liable to no reproof.—To summon and commisionate soldiers, by croisade, to fight against and destroy infidels, &c. Now, brethren, is it fit for any men in their senses to own such claims as these? Can there be any safety or liberty, truth or justice, where these powers are granted to

any mortal? Did the keys of the kingdom of heaven, given to *St. Peter*, intend any thing so boundless and absolute in itself, and so oppressive and enslaving to the world? Who then would be a Christian? Is the yoke easy, &c. These powers have sometimes met with some check and contradiction, but of no effect and continuance; and whatever was resum'd by some councils, as that of *Constance* and *Basil*, was lost again, and in a silent, but effectual, way resum'd by the council of *Trent*, by the clause, *Proponentibus Legatis*, and by the referring all things to the Pope's confirmation, and salvo to his authority. So that the council of *Trent*, so earnestly desired by emperors and kings, to settle the disorder'd state of religion, was conducted by the court of *Rome* to defeat all attempts for reformation.* It remain'd therefore, that all that were convinced of the very corrupt state of religion in the *Roman* communion should carry on their protestations, and reform themselves in the best manner they could, to advance the honour and obtain the favour of God, and their own peace and edification. Therefore our learned and pious bishop *Jewel* writes to his friend in *Italy*, Signior *Scipio*; When you see that all things are

* F. Paul, p. 436. *Vergerius*.

most unjustly handled, that nothing is sincerely and fairly carried in the council, you may not wonder that our men had rather tarry at home, than take so long and idle a journey, in which they shall both lose their labour and betray their cause.

You will say, It is not lawful to make a change in religion without order from the Pope and the general council. Yet the Popes have changed almost the whole state of the primitive church, without any council at all.

For, what? While the Pope assembleth the council, and the bishops and abbots return home, will they have God's people in the mean time to be deceiv'd, to err, to mistake themselves, to be overwhelm'd with errors, and want the knowledge of God, and to be carried to everlasting destruction?

Is it not lawful for any of us to believe in Christ, to profess the gospel, to serve God aright, to fly superstition and idolatry, except they will give us leave?

The state of God's children were most miserable, if, there being so many errors and so generally spread, and so gross, so blind, so foul, so perspicuous, and manifest, that even our adversaries themselves are not able to deny them, nothing could be done without the whole world could meet in a general council.

Thus

Thus he reasonably expostulates, and makes it evident, that corruptions in religion must not be suffer'd to go on without observation and detection, without opposition and reformation: That we may reform ourselves in *England*, and that every country, city, or church may do so, without getting a licence from the Pope and a council. Must the word and commands of God, which we are sure are his, and the gospel of Christ stay for letters of commendation from them?

Must we ask leave of any mortal man to open our eyes, to use our understanding, to seek God and worship him, as our conscience directs and he commands? Must we, who were baptized into the observance of all that Christ commanded, neglect to read his gospel, and instead of the commandments of Christ observe the arbitrary commands of a man, that will call himself the head and the master of the church. These demands are impious and shocking to those that read the testament, and believe the sufficiency and faithfulness of the apostles of Christ in delivering to us all things they had received of him, and declaring to us the whole counsel of God.

The means of acquiring the methods of using their beloved prerogatives, and the mischiefs they have caused in the world,
gave

gave the loudest call to thinking and sober men to disown and condemn them. From the beginning it was not so; nor is it pretended to be the original state of Christianity. Wicked and worldly men, getting into office in the church, pursued the gratification of their lust of power, and pomp and riches, abused the respect that was shown to them for the sake of Christ and his gospel by people of simplicity, and by emperors that were converted to the Christian faith. All the changes in the empire were watched for opportunities to aggrandize their power; till at last *Boniface III.* by wicked compliances with a murderer and usurper, *Phocas*, got the title of *head of the church* and *universal bishop*; and then their power increased prodigiously, and his successors always took the advantage of the weakness of the *Greek* emperors and the disorders in *Italy*, to encrease their authority by policy and violence; and to declare war against emperors, to whom before they had been subject.* So that the emperor *Babarossa* in 1150. writes to the princes of *Germany*, That the Popes being enriched by the emperor, now undertake to dethrone kings, and princes, and will have none equal with themselves: That they aspire to divinity

* Richer. hist. concil. gener. *Aventin*, hist. Bo.

itself,

itself, and that they would be no less feared and adored than God himself, nay even more ; and that the Christian religion hath no greater enemies than they.

Their authority has been used to raise the most bloody wars, and by the cursed projects of *Croisado's* to engage Christian princes and people to weaken themselves and harrafs and destroy one another, that they might be a prey to the Popes, and incapable of defending their own privileges and the immunities of their country. Their bloody cruelties executed by these have been justly presented, to your horror and amazement ; and yet half has not been told you.

Another use of their usurped authority will lead me directly to the necessity of the reformation ; *that* was, the most scandalous means of raising money by indulgences ; which, as you have heard, was the chief design of the invention of purgatory ; before which no body troubled their heads about indulgences, as *Fisher* bishop of *Rochester* declares in his book against *Luther*, Artic. 13.

This was the awakening imposition that made all men feel the cruel bondage ; this detected the greediness of filthy lucre, that utterly destroyed the most canonical pretences of the bishop of *Rome*.

Pope

Pope *Leo X.* who, as Father *Paul* sets him forth, had a noble birth and education, good parts, singular learning, in humanity, goodness, and a sweet manner in treating affairs,----a great inclination to favour those that were learned ;---- would have been a Pope absolutely complete, if with these he had join'd some knowledge in things that concern religion, and some more propension to piety ; of both which he seemed careless.

When money must be had, by the advice of *Lorenzo Pucci*, one of his Cardinals, he sends out a plenary indulgence --- as *Urban II.* had done, to set on foot the holy war---and after, the same indulgences were given for taking arms against them, that would not obey the church ; and infinite exactions were made under those pretences. --Now all that would give money might have full pardons, even for those that were dead, that they should be freed from purgatory. *Thuanus* says, that he sent his bulls throughout Christendom to raise money for his immense expences, promising the expiation of all sins, and eternal life, at a set price and rate, according to the nature of the crimes ; and he appointed a treasury, and questors, and preachers to set forth the value and efficacy of these indulgences.

D

Then

Then rose *Luther*, a Monk, who refuted and exposed the discourses of the preachers, questions the Pope's power to give indulgences, and proceeds to examine the doctrines of Popery, and finds them corrupted and deprav'd, and publishes ninety-five theses : and thus the dawn of the reformation appear'd, after a long and dark night, and nothing was able to stop the progress of it. Many others arise with an unfeigned zeal for truth, and are by no means either to be bribed or deterred, till they had laid open the reigning corruption and abuses, and brought back Christians to the pure word of God, and the holy institutions of Jesus Christ. In all this the hand of God appeared, and the true spring of the necessity was from him ; he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast. He said, let there be light, and there was light. 'Twas the call of God to come out from the communion, whose errors and impieties have been prov'd to you. The necessity I am considering, to which all the foregoing discourse refers, operated mightily upon the chosen vessels of the reformation, whose language was as the apostles, *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,** The word of God was in their

* Acts iv. 20.

heart as a burning fire shut up in their bones, as *Jeremiah* speaks, *I was weary with forbearing, I could not stay*. There was a necessity impress'd on their mind; and this will not be difficult to make evident, nor appear ridiculous to sober minds, when a *Cicero* could say, ---*Nemo sine afflatu divino verè magnus*. There was a magnanimity in the first reformers, that must always perpetuate their memories to the glory of God; and we should hope and pray, that the residue of that spirit may revive that work, and make a reformation flourish again.

I must own that when we speak of necessity in common discourse, we mean many times the connection of certain things or actions, with ends proposed and intended, either to escape evil or attain good; we also by it express natural and strong inclinations prevailing against some weaker bias and propension; or we mean somewhat that is fit and proper to the apprehension and judgment of our minds-- All these constitute a compleat necessity. So that we do not mean a thing that could not possibly not be, or be otherwise than it is; 'tis so different in our case, that it is a wonder and surprise, that such an event should appear in the world: that when the world lieth in wickedness, and all

men shun danger, shift off labour, and love their ease, that any should concern themselves in such an affair. *When a strong man arm'd keeps his palace, his goods are in peace* ;* and who would care to attack and provoke him ? What is every one's concern is no body's business. A necessity in the case is most evident. Could men undertake such a work without pressing motives ? The difficulties and dangers, the adversaries and enemies make it sure, that whatever was the spring, the necessity was inevitable. We estimate the strength of any spring by the weight it moves, and every weight by its counterpoise. Look therefore how few, how mean, how despised, the first actors in this cause were. *Mattheo Langi*, as Father *Paul* tells us, p. 55. It is not to be omitted, says he, that Cardinal *Mattheo Langi*, archbishop of *Saltzburg*, told every one, that the reformation of the mass was honest, the liberty of meats convenient, and the demand just to be disburthened of so many commandments of men : but that a poor *Monk should reform all, was not to be endured*. When the long arms of the Pope, the emperor's jealousy of his power, the prejudices of an old religion, stood in their way, what could keep up their courage or

* Luke xi. 22.

engage them to move a step? how could *Luther* venture into *Wormes*, where he had so many enemies? They knew that bonds and afflictions attended them. They knew what were the threatnings of their enemies; *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against them.** How many mercenary pens and vile tongues employ'd to calumniate them? how many wheedling and cajoling offers, the mitres and the purple to allure them? One exhorts the Pope to convince them with chains and fire; all princes applied to to withdraw their protection. The Cardinal *Volterra*, who had discouraged *Adrian VI.* from his attempts for reformation as an endless work, tells him, heresies were not to be extinguished by reformation, but *Crusadoes*; by exciting princes and people to root them out; that *Innocent III.* did happily thus oppress the *Albigenses* of *Languedoc*, and other Popes the *Waldenses*, *Picards*, and *poor men* of *Lions*: that there would not be wanting in *Germany* many princes, who in case the Pope would give them leave to seize themselves of the states of *Luther's* favourers, would greedily embrace the condition: and that he might cause many people to follow them, by granting indulgences and par-

* Acts iv. 26.

done, to whosoever would assist them. You see what threatned them. They went on with the work, tho' Pope *Adrian VI.* had the conscience and humanity to complain, that the condition of Popes was miserable, seeing it was plain, that they could do no good, tho' they desired and endeavoured to do it; and that it was not possible to effect any one point of reformation. These accounts taken out of the diary of the bishop of *Fabiano*, by Father *Paul*, p. 24.

The necessities and persecutions, the wars, the assaults and plundering they were exposed to, the routs and ruins that they sustain'd, demonstrated a mighty necessity that carry'd them on in their work: that, as the apostle speaks, *a necessity is laid on me*. They knew the fate of those that had suffer'd in the same cause; the cruel death of *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague*, the bloody wars of *Bobemia*, the sufferings that attended even their glorious successes under *Zisca*, and the misery at last brought on them by the perfidiousness of some among themselves. These things could not be unthought of, but they were counterbalanc'd, as in our text, *by faith, and a divine call*. It could by no means satisfy their conscience to be told, that * *Luther* ought

* F. *Paul*, p. 28.

not to be excus'd by the scandals and grievances of the church of *Rome* ;---for in case they were true, yet ought they not to forsake the Catholick unity, but rather support what was amiss with all patience. It was a brave answer of *Luther* to an emperor, demanding his revocation, That he could not revoke any thing he had written or taught, if he were not convinced by the scriptures, or evident reason. He would indeed submit to a future council, if sentence were to be given on the articles drawn out of his book, according to the scriptures. And when he was ask'd, What remedy ought to be us'd to compose the troubles? He answered, Those only proposed by *Gamaliel* to the *Jews*, That if the enterprize were of man it would vanish, but if it came from God it was impossible to hinder it. And that might give satisfaction to the Pope ; because all men ought to rest secure, as he, *Luther*, did, that if his design came not from God, it would perish in a short time. You see here, that a necessity was prevailing against all the common fears and hopes of men.---The zeal of God's house, as *Luther* declared, had animated and supported him ; and when he own'd his books, he boldly declares, It was too manifest that all the countries of Christendom were oppress'd, and groaned under
the

the bondage; and that to retract, would be to confirm the tyranny. He turned himself to the emperor and princes, saying, It was a blessing of God when the true doctrine came to be made manifest, and to reject it was to draw on us extreme calamities.

The elector *Palatine* was then obliged to interpose; or he had been then deliver'd up, had not that prince protested, That he would never draw on *Germany* the infamy of not keeping the publick faith to serve priests.

We have own'd the hand of God, we have prov'd the strong sensations of their own hearts in the reformers. We are now to consider, *thirdly*, the several things that constitute this necessity, and cause these inclinations for reformation from Popery: 'Tis lamentable that so few minds are rightly dispos'd for this, and that, from various causes, multitudes are unmoveable in this concern. Persons dead to wisdom, virtue, and religion, that have no thought or reflection, that love and sit in darkness, we leave out of the case; for when we speak of reason and necessity, we suppose that men use their sense and reason; that this necessity is the poise and spring that moves intelligent agents. Reason and interest, or self-preservation and defence, religion

ligion and conscience towards God, which obligeth to benevolence towards all men, are the constituents of this necessity.

1. There are some things abhorrent to nature. Innocent and uncorrupted nature has some strong antipathies, that arise to an indignation that cannot bear some objects. Falshood and forgery, tyranny and oppression, injustice and cruelty, hypocritical pretences to religion, only to accomplish secular and worldly purposes; such appearances indeed were sufficient to induce us to what I have defin'd the Reformation to be. Jugglers and impostors had made a prey of unwary souls, abus'd their ignorance and credulity, made them the tools of their wicked purposes to their own ruin, their ingratitude to emperors that had enriched and raised them, perverting noble institutions from their proper designs and use; the merciless authors of general calamities and great mischiefs. More than *Trent* anathemas are denounced against such as these.

The mind of man is susceptible of noble passions and affections; no tyrants could be secure where honour and conscience reign in the hearts of men. They would serve them as the *Romans* did the memory of *Paul IV.* before he was well dead, all was tumult in *Rome* from the great hatred the people had conceived against him. The heads of

the Pope's statues were beaten off and drawn through the streets; the inquisition he had been so fond of burnt, and the prisoners released, and all the moveable arms and monuments of the house of *Caraffa* torn in peices. So that you see there are such circumstances of things here, that if men hold their peace the stones of the street cry out.

2. A necessity of interest, self-preservation and defence. The claims of the papacy are sufficiently evident, that they oppress our liberties, challenge all our properties, bring us under the lash of most terrible censures, and that direful excommunication, that through the ignorance and bigotry of the people hath been the disgrace and ruin of many illustrious princes and their dominions. *Sixtus Quintus*, who had been, as some tell us, originally a hog-driver, and rose to the Popedom to feed the sheep of Christ, had the insolence to excommunicate *Henry IV. of France*,* and to declare him incapable of succeeding to the crown; proudly boasting, that he being in the high station and in the full power that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords had given him, he declared him and others hereticks, and every body knows the consequences of that. They can tell

* *Moyens surs & honêtes pour la convers. des heretiques. Mez. life of H. IV. p. 367.*

kings with a most haughty air, that if they touch their power or take from them their obedience, they will take from them their kingdom and the communion of Christendom ; that their pen, ink, and paper, that is, their bulls, are not inferior to those of kings, to their arrets and acts of Parliament.

The pride and power of the *Roman* pontiff has been abated by the blessed reformation, but they still have the same inclinations to tyranny, and only want opportunity to act over again the same pride and violence by which so many have been made miserable.

3. The main spring and force of this is conscience ; the sense of our duty to God. This appear'd in all the steps of the reformation, and nothing else could have engaged the reformers to disturb the course of error and the reign of Popery at so great a hazard, and with so unequal forces. But *conscience is a heavy weight, grave pondus* ; the call of God an awful sound, and the firm persuasion of this an all-sufficient support. Faith will bear us up and carry us on.

Whatever peace and emolument we might have secured by silence and submission to long continued usurpations, the call of God would have disturbed all our tranquillity. Whatever they that im-

prudently call themselves the church, and the only catholick church, the only true ministry and pastors, may with noise and confidence challenge, we see clearly their impostures and corruptions, their superstition and idolatry, their antichristian doctrines and opposition to the truths of the gospel; and are sure that God calls us and all persons to whom his word comes, to separate and come out from among them. The record of this call and command to *Abraham*, with the commendation of his faith set before us as an example to us, become a real call to us, as if the God of glory that appear'd to him had appeared to us. Christ and his apostles by preaching and delivering the gospel truth, and by warning us of false apostles and deceitful workers, call all men every where to adhere to the truth as it is in Jesus.

The ministry that they instituted we are bound to set up:* the assemblies of Christians which they commanded we are bound

* *Claude* Hist. Def. of the Reformat. part 4. p. 97. It seems to me, says a great defender of the reformation, that the firm opinion of the absolute necessity of episcopacy, that goes so high as to own no church, or call, or ministry, or sacraments or salvation in the world, where there are no episcopal ordinations, altho' there should be the true faith, the true doctrine and piety there, and which would that all religion should depend on a formality which *he thought* he had shown to be a human institution. ---I cannot, says he, avoid having at least a contempt of those kind of thoughts, and a compassion for those who fill their heads with them.

to frequent : the sacraments they instituted we are bound to observe : and we are sure, that where two or three are met together in the name of Christ, he will be with them ; they have his authority, and shall have his blessing. Now should we neglect his call, or corrupt his institutions, we tremble at the anathema that would then indeed belong to us. ----God speaks, as he did to *Pharaoh* by *Moses* and *Aaron*, Let my people go : and Protestants say, as they, Let us sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us.---We know that if we deny Christ before men, he will deny us before his father. Conscience obliges us to be concern'd for the honour of God ; his name is concern'd, and his good ways are blasphemed, the religion of the blessed Jesus misrepresented and made contemptible to infidels, who form their notions of it from the principles and practices, and the superstitious ceremonies of the *Roman* church. Zeal therefore for the honour of our Redeemer excites us.

The dangerous delusions of a multitude of poor souls move our compassion, and we cannot but think our separation from the *Roman* communion necessary, to hold out a light of warning and direction to them. 'Tis conscience therefore of our duty to God and man, and that fidelity that we owe to
Jesus

Jesus Christ our only Lord, that bind this necessity upon us.

This engages us, who are called to minister in the gospel, to call upon you and warn you of your danger, and stir you up to your duty to watch against the attempts of those that lie in wait to deceive you. Maintain your separation from the corruptions and abominations of Popery. Who would not fly from *Sodom*, tho' it were but to *Zoar*? Who would look back, that was once warn'd of the judgments that must sooner or later be poured down on *Babylon*?* There is a voice from heaven, the whole word of God speaks this to us, a necessity is upon you, and woe to you if you believe not or obey not the call of God; Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues --- for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her. Should we not then go out, should we ever think of returning? Who would not leave *Jerusalem* itself, as the first Christians did, when they are warned of God? for even the temple of God itself can be no security to those that had crucified the son of God, and refused to have him reign over them; much less can the pretended vicar of Christ protect those by his indulgences, absolutions

* Rev. xviii. 4, 8.

and

and pardons, who join themselves to the corrupters of the gospel of Christ.

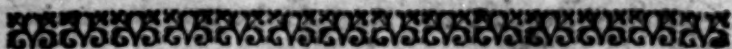
Therefore let us continue Protestants indeed, and we shall not in the end repent of any labours, hazards or expences, that it may cost us. Let us adhere to our bible; let us be humble and cautious, look to God by daily fervent prayer, that he that has called us to go out of *Babylon*, would conduct us to the end.

Let us be humble and cautious, not too severe upon imperfect, differing or erring Protestants: let us keep our own conscience void of offence, and leave others to their great master. Let us not seek the praise of men, or be discouraged at their censures. Judge nothing before its time, but wait for that time, when every one shall receive their praise of God.

We rejoice in the reformation of *Germany, Swisserland, Geneva, France* (as it once was, oh that it were such now) and the churches of *England* and *Scotland*! but our reformation must be according to our light, from the word of God and the dictates of a sincerely enquiring conscience; we must so worship God as we think will be most acceptable to him, and leave others so to do, without uncharitable censures or any separation; but what we are forced to by unlawful terms of communion insisted on, and imposed on
us.

us. To this we have a call of God, and let us commit ourselves to him, and obey it faithfully, and his promises will be made good to the full: so I shall conclude, as this lecture began; Let us maintain a becoming jealousy, lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

F I N I S.



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